Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

A theory has been advanced as to what the matter is with Mr. Bellamy and the Nationalists. The New York "People," the organ of the State Socialists, thinks it plain that, in trying to divorce himself and following from the State Socialists, Mr. Bellamy's object is to appear respectable and make converts to the so-called "People's party." "Der Loyalist" says that he objects to the term Socialism because of its definiteness; but this is preposterous. Mr. Bellamy's system is far more definite than that of the Social Democrats. Equal rewards for unequal services is much more simple than unequal rewards for unequal services.

A French economist, in writing about the decadence of the precious metals, says: "The attributes which raised them to their exalted station seem to be dropping off, one by one, like the jewels from off a diadem. Supplanted as instruments of exchange by the improvements effected in commerce and in credit, despised as articles of luxury by the fashion of our day, it may be that, after having been so long the very type of wealth, gold and silver are destined to be one day erased from the catalogue of riches!" The reviewer of the "Nation" thinks that this is speculation almost puerile in its character; but what the average reviewer thinks or says has long ceased to be of any consequence.

Russell Sage evidently supposes that his life is of a great deal of consequence to us, so much that his recent miraculous escape from death should cause us to "increase our faith, our love, our trust in the God that created us, the God of our salvation and redemption." The same bomb from which the notorious stock-gambler escaped killed an honest, hard-working man, the gambler's private secretary. This, we suppose, was providential too. But the increase of faith, love, trust, and so on, in the God that created stock-gamblers, the God of their salvation and redemption, might be greater if in this case the gambler had been blown to atoms and his secretary saved. Really the lesson to be drawn is that stock-gamblers and other cheats had better leave the rotten cant of the pulpit out of their addresses to the public. It is a kind of stuff that does not look well in print.

The Chicago "Herald" says: "The writers of the New York 'Sun' are very able and always entertaining. They furnish their readers the only newspaper in the United States which is patronized solely for its style. It is not a detriment to the fullest success of that journal that its expressions of opinion are absolutely without intrinsic value; indeed, the consistent vacillation, perversity, and falsity of the 'Sun' in opinion and argument force the conviction that its unreliability is a deliberate policy, adopted for the purpose of securing a unique and spectacular position, and because it offers a larger field for the exercise of artistic talent in composition than homely and practical honesty would afford. The 'Sun' is the Machiavelli of modern journalism, and the 'Herald' congratulates it upon the fact that its devotion to dishonesty has been so lucidly demonstrated through the many years of its existence that the veriest dolt who reads the paper never for an instant believes it to be in earnest." Liberty sympathizes with this pronouncement, but protests against the notion that homely and practical honesty does not offer as large a field for artistic talent in composition as hypocrisy or Machiavellianism does. The "Herald" forgets that honesty has not merely to promulgate its own faith, but to fight and overcome the false gospel of its foes. This negative part of the work certainly offers a wide field for the most brilliant powers. The "Herald" itself illustrates the truth of this averment. It is doubtless a bright paper, but it is bright only because it is always engaged in a fight with somebody. When it does not fight the tariff, the Chicago mayor, or the Chicago chief of police, it is exceedingly dull. If the "Herald" knew more, it would have more enemies to fight, and it would be a much brighter paper.

The "New Nation" offers a plea for greater clearness in the use of language and recommends the use of specific instead of generic terms. When a man says he is a Socialist, the "New Nation" says he does not tell us what he is at all, and a cross examination is necessary to ascertain to which of the component parts of the Socialist body he belongs. Liberty agrees with the "New Nation" in this, although that paper no sooner undertakes a classification of these parts than it commits a grave blunder. It states that "on the extreme left wing we find the Anarchists, who disbelieve in government pretty much altogether, and look askance even at any sort of general industrial organization. This wing of the Socialists, which is represented in England by William Morris, on the continent of Europe, and especially in the Latin countries, is altogether the largest element of the Socialist party. Not only does this class of Socialists aim at an Anarchic or unorganized social state as the ultimate ideal, but it proposes and expects to attain it by violent and revolutionary methods. This is the form of Socialism which in Europe has undertaken not only a social but a religious revolution by making Atheism almost an obligatory plank in its platform. This is the sort of Socialism which the Pope is attacking in his numerous condemnatory encyclicals; it is the kind that is most largely represented in Europe, and is probably the only sort he really knows anything about. So much for the Anarchistic Socialists." The people here spoken of are not Anarchistic Socialists at all, but revolutionary Communists. That they form the largest element of the Socialist party is news to me; I had thought that the Marxites truthfully claim superiority of numbers. I think so still. The Anarchistic Socialists are those who, in this country, call themselves mutualist, and they belong to the body of philosophical Anarchists. These aim at an Anarchic and (in a drill-sergeant's sense) unorganized social state, but for violent methods they have no use.

Fact versus Cant.

[New York Sun.]

When we here recall the landing of the Pilgrims, let us remember that they not only sought freedom to worship God, but they also sought to establish the freedom and liberty of manhood.—*Mr. Grover Cleveland at the Brooklyn Forefathers' Dinner.*

Let us remember that the Pilgrims didn't seek anything of the kind. They wanted to establish, and did establish, a religious and civil oligarchy. Freedom, as they understood it, meant the right to drive out everybody whose opinions differed from theirs. The Mayflower crowd should not, however, be held responsible for all the cant that has been talked about it.

A Liberal People.

[Gen. Trumbull in Open Court.]

What I admire in the American people is their liberal treatment of office holders. I was in office once myself, and I remember that a grateful nation gave me the salary, and then paid a lot of deputies to do the work. My office was by appointment, but if it had been elective I have no doubt the government would not only have given me my salary, but would have allowed me to steal enough money to pay my election expenses too. I remember when "Doc" Ridley was elected Treasurer of Marbletown, the City Council fixed his salary at one thousand dollars a year. A partisan friend who had hustled for "Doc" at the polls, complained of the Council, saying, "That reduces the salary to four hundred dollars, for 'Doc' had to pay six hundred dollars to be elected, and the Council ought to have considered that." This story has always been received with a sneer of incredulity whenever I have told it, as if it were one of those dull fictions which try to pass current as American humor; but what will the sceptical critics say to that very identical claim now set up by the Treasurer of Chicago, as appears by an interview reported in this morning's paper? Being asked if he intended to apply a certain part of the interest on the city funds to his own use, he said: "Why, certainly, I did not run for office for fun. I have my election expenses to pay, and my lawyer's fees — they were six thousand dollars." This testifies to the generosity of the American people. Probably no other people in the world would be so liberal as to allow the winning candidate to take his election expenses in that way. The losing candidate pays his own bills. He gets no rebate whatever.

What Woman's Freedom Means.

[Gertrude Atherton.]

What will be the result when women get the bit fairly between their teeth is unsafe of prediction. That in time it will alter the very features on the face of the earth can hardly be doubted. The moral code will be the first to feel the strain, snap, and then go over to the dust heap. Women having the refinement of centuries in their blood will never care to adopt the utmost license of men, but they will arrange their lives to please themselves, and, if their pleasure interferes with outworn codes, they will yawn the latter aside. Matrimony is pretty sure to go by the board. Human nature in its perpetual changes was never intended to endure one unvarying partner. Man has recognized this, and calmly reclothes his ideal whenever the fancy suits him. Woman will not be long embracing the same privilege.

Why Storm Follows Battle.

[Ambrose Bierce.]

Professor Simon Newcomb, it appears, does not believe that rain can be made to fall upon either the just or the unjust by explosion, or rather concussion. He says that, if great rains follow great battles, they are caused by the smoke. But he doubts that they do follow. I know from observation that they do not always follow, or did not in our civil war; but they did follow so frequently that it seemed to me, and to most of those engaged, that there was more than a coincidental relation between battle and storm. I thought then that concussion might have something to do with it, but have now for many years been persuaded that the rains were caused by efforts of the angels to drown our whole assassin crowd, — the victors, the vanquished, and the generals.

Faith in the People.

[Ambrose Bierce.]

Heaven knows that I do not permit any one to hold in higher esteem than I the intelligence and virtues of the public. My faith in the people is as a great signal-fire beaconing my pathway through the Valley of the Shadow of Doubt and cheering me on my way to question the Silent Oracle. Nevertheless, I believe that if all the convicts at San Quentin or Folsom were to be left one hundred thousand dollars each today, and were not pardoned by next week, the populace would march upon the prison, release them by force, hang the warden, and flog all the guards.

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BOSTON, MASS., JANUARY 2, 1892.

"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

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An Exchange of Cordial Invitations.

That the world moves may now be considered an absolutely settled point. There is no longer any room for doubt or scepticism. Why, Mr. Bellamy has actually addressed a short editorial to the philosophic Anarchists and has endorsed a very interesting argument made by a young English author and Socialist, H. S. Salt, in favor of a treaty of peace and harmony between State Socialists and Anarchists. It fairly takes one's breath away to think that Mr. Bellamy has not only condescended at last to recognize the fact that philosophic Anarchists exist and play a part in the reform movement, but has done us the honor of inviting us to join his forces and coöperate with him in propagating Nationalism. Our joy of course knows no bounds, and language is utterly inadequate to express the gratitude which we feel and the respect which we cherish for Mr. Bellamy. I leave it to the reader's great imaginative powers to realize to himself the intensity of the painful feeling which must, and does in fact, accompany our humble yet deliberate and emphatic declination of Mr. Bellamy's generous offer to take us into his service and make worthy Nationalists of us. The interests of truth alone prompt both our refusal and the modest suggestion that Mr. Bellamy, as well as Mr. Salt, does not fully and completely understand our position. With his permission, we will offer a word of explanation.

Is Socialism slavery? asks Mr. Salt, and proceeds to show that it is nothing of the kind. Against the notion that Individualism and Socialism (of the Fabian variety) are opposites, he vigorously protests. Individualism, he observes, is an extremely perilous and equivocal watchword, "covering as it does in ordinary parlance the two wholly different concepts of man-making and money-making," personality and personalty. So, while the charge that Fabian or State Socialism is slavery is calculated to make the unskilful laugh, the judicious should bethink themselves that commercial or prevailing "Individualism" is itself the most potent destroyer of individuality. Can it be supposed, Mr. Salt puts it to us, that Socialists are unaware of the obvious fact that our modern civilization endangers the very existence of individuality? And is it not just conceivable that those who most feel the need of a Socialistic legislation are also most alive to the equal need of giving free scope to genuine personal idiosyncracies, — in a word, that they are Socialists not in spite of, but in consequence of, their regard for the individual? To Mr. Salt, the essential question seems to be this, — in what *spirit* do Socialists advocate the principle of State interference in the distribution of wealth? And he doubts not that those who are in a position to take a full and clear view of the Socialistic movement can see that its real ultimate tendency is much more likely to afford satisfaction to the uncompromising Anarchist than to the drill-sergeant who has an inborn partiality for regimentation. The trouble is, in Mr. Salt's judgment, that there are many Socialists who, in the hurry and bustle of political crusade, do not and cannot look beyond the immediate object they have in view. It is true nevertheless that the generality of Socialists are convinced of the sacredness of liberty, and are not enamored of "law and order" as a permanent institution. They would, surely, pass some drastic laws concerning the organization and payment of industry; but a period of State Socialism is not necessarily inimical to the development of genuine individuality. The true Socialist formula is, — *From unjust laws to just laws, from just laws to no laws.*

Mr. Salt continues:

> It will be said, no doubt, that like begets like, and that, however pious be the intention of those who preach Socialism as the path to Individualism, the result must inevitably be disastrous, since individual liberty cannot, in the nature of things, be promoted by a course of State interference. Now the few thorough-going Individualist-Anarchists, who attribute our present evils not merely to the injustice of established governments but to the existence of any government at all, may perhaps consistently plead that the extended application of Socialist principles would, so far as it went, be an attempt to heal the sufferer with a hair of the dog that bit him. It is my belief, for reasons presently to be suggested, that there is no ultimate antagonism between Socialism and extremest Anarchism; but it must be admitted that the objection is not out of place when urged by the small band of Anarchists who have the courage of their opinions. Coming from the ordinary supporters of the present system, the cry of danger to "individual liberty" is ridiculous enough, since the governmental supervision which Socialists invoke would be directed only to those abuses where so-called "liberty" is the merest fraud and delusion.
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> For example, the *laissez-faire* economists have for years made "freedom" their motto, and out of this "freedom" has been developed a system of commercial wage slavery as detrimental to individual independence as any serfdom that could be devised! . . .
>
> That the charge of undervaluing and endangering true personality of character should be urged against Socialists, and further, that it should be urged by those who would maintain the present utterly chaotic and invertebrate social state, is a stroke of unconscious humor which deserves a word of recognition. For, as a matter of fact, it is mainly in the Socialist camp, and in the camp of those who are not unfriendly to Socialism, that we must look for two thirds of whatever individuality is now-a-days existent among us; and it is surely a fact of some significance that the fullest appreciation of such intensely individualist writers as Whitman and Thoreau, Tolstoi and Ibsen, should hail from the same direction.
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> So far I have spoken of a common misunderstanding of the tendency of Socialism by the ordinary member of society. As between Socialism and Anarchism the case is somewhat different; though here, also, the prevailing babel of words seems to have generated some confusion of sentiment. In a strict philosophical sense there is, no doubt, an antithesis between Anarchy and regimentation, but nevertheless there is no practical reason why Socialists and Anarchists should jump to the conclusion that they are involved in an irreconcilable dispute. The when is a vital point which is often, and most unaccountably, left out of consideration in the discussion of these themes. Short-sighted Socialists look only at today; far-sighted Anarchists can see nothing but tomorrow; hence the quarrel between the two factions is one of time rather than of principle. But when once it is understood that Anarchism is the further horizon, the ideal of Socialism, all contradiction vanishes, and it is seen that one and the same man may, with perfect consistency, be a State Socialist as regards the politics of today, and an extreme Anarchist in his forecast of tomorrow; he will preach Socialism when he speaks as a politician, Anarchism when he speaks as an idealist. Let us suppose that an army has to be marched through two passes, or, to take a more homely metaphor, that a pig has to be driven through two gates. Both passes, or both gates, must in each case be kept open; and the advanced guard that is detached to do the further duty is coöperating, even if it be unaware of the fact, with the main army that devotes itself to the nearer one; the time of the one is the present, of the other the future, that is the sole difference between them. Even so it is in the double transition that has been spoken of, from unjust laws to just laws, which is Socialism; from just laws to no laws, which is Anarchism.
>
> In conclusion, then, there is no ultimate incompatibility between Socialism and Individualism; for Anarchy — the "state of nature" of which Rousseau was the prophet — is the goal where extreme Communists and extreme Individualists even now-a-days meet, and where both parties will unite their forces in the future.

I have given these liberal quotations from Mr. Salt's argument, not, as the discriminating reader will readily infer, because they contain any new point or suggestion, but because the ancient Socialist response to the Anarchist critic of his scheme is there presented in the most graceful and captivating form. To disclose the hidden fallacies and unwarranted assumptions which vitiate the Socialist argument but few words are needed. Before I utter them, let us dutifully listen to Mr. Bellamy's message of good-will:

> The admirable article of Henry S. Salt is particularly calculated to be reassuring to persons who fear for the interests of individualism under the coming coöperative organization of industry and society. The philosophic Anarchist should, as Mr. Salt well says, regard the progress of the Socialistic movement with satisfaction, for it is only through and by just laws that we shall attain that moral and intellectual condition that shall enable us to dispense with law. We shall all readily agree with the philosophic Anarchist that the ideal state of society is one in which the least possible amount of law or coercion is necessary. To abrogate laws before they have ceased, through the process of education, to be necessary, would however only make matters worse. It is only when laws become obsolete because the necessity for them has been outgrown, that we attain to Anarchy in its feasible and desirable sense. This is the way by which Nationalism would lead the world, and we would remind the impatient Anarchist who would be at once at his goal, that this is one more of the many instances in which "the longest way round is the shortest way there."

Now this Salt-Bellamy plea would be simply irresistible if, firstly, Anarchism were what they conceive it to be, and, secondly, if State Socialism were what they claim it to be. But, unfortunately for the prospects of peace, we utterly repudiate the meaning which our gentle wooers attach to our distinctive party name, and firmly deny their allegations as to what their Socialism implies and involves. They assume throughout the argument that Anarchists desire a state of "no law," and desire it here and now, — that Anarchism signifies the absence of all restraints and laws, and that "no government" means simply and exactly no coercion. It is further assumed that State Socialism stands for justice in laws and government, and that the objection of the Anarchists proceeds solely from their opposition to law, irrespective of its relation to justice. The truth, however, is, as has been pointed out in these columns a thousand times, that Anarchism signifies a state of equal freedom, which is justice, and that Anarchists put no obstacles in the way of just laws *justly enforced*. Anarchism means no government, but it does not mean no laws and no coercion. This may seem paradoxical, but the paradox vanishes when the Anarchist definition of government is kept in view. Anarchists oppose government, not because they disbelieve in punishment of crime and resistance to aggression, but because they disbelieve in compulsory protection. Protection and taxation without consent is itself invasion; hence Anarchism favors a system of voluntary taxation and protection. Did State Socialism contemplate merely the substitution of just laws for the prevailing unjust laws, Anarchism would not antagonize it, for there would then be no differences between the two schools. In the ultimate condition of no law the Anarchists are interested no more and no less than any other class of men; the millennium is as far, or as near, to us as it is to sincere Christians, or to any other body of men who deem it worth while to indulge in hopes and dreams of a perfect social state. The Anarchists, as Anarchists, work, directly, not for a perfect social state, but for a perfect political system. A perfect social state is a state totally free from sin or crime or folly; a perfect political system is merely a system in which justice is observed, in which nothing is punished but crime and nobody coerced but invaders. We oppose the present political system for the reason that most of the laws, and the methods of enforcing them, are subversive of justice or the law of equal

freedom; and the same objection applies to State Socialism. The laws and methods which it proposes are equally wrong in principle.

Whether State Socialism, in operation, would bear more heavily on the individual than the present system or not, is a question not of the first order of importance. In our opinion State Socialism would be a more crushing tyranny and more galling slavery than the semi-individualism of today. Mr. Salt assures us that for every new law which the State Socialists would pass they would abolish a dozen, but we cannot accept a statement so strongly at variance with the facts. In the first place, while the hints or allusions to the repeal of laws are brief, few, and far between in Socialist platforms and expositions, the lists of new laws to be enacted are long and strong. In the second place the injurious consequences of a system do not vary as the number of its tyrannical laws. More depends on quality than on quantity, on the kind than on the numbers. It is true, of course, that Freedom is made up of many separate freedoms; but the violations of some of these freedoms are not fraught with nearly the same fatal consequences as the violations of other freedoms. Equally important in principle, these freedoms are not equally important in practice. Hence, even if Mr. Salt were right in representing that his system would afford us a larger number of freedoms, our hostility to it would not be lessened, for the freedoms which Socialism seeks to destroy are the most precious and important kind.

It follows from what has been said that the quarrel between Socialists and Anarchists is emphatically not one of time, but one of principle. The question between them is simply as to what justice is, as to what just laws are.

Having pointed out the error of defining Anarchism as no law, and the correlative error of assuming that we are opposing State Socialism because, instead of no law, it proposes merely the substitution of just law for unjust law, it remains to advert to a third serious error Mr. Salt has fallen into. He describes the existing system as being individualistic in a commercial sense, as allowing freedom of money-making instead of the nobler freedom of man-making. Out of the commercial freedom, he says, has grown a system of commercial wage slavery worse than real personal slavery; and he demands the freedom of man-making while relinquishing without regret the commercial liberty which is only an abuse, a mere fraud and delusion. The Anarchists are unable to accept Mr. Salt's distinction. Freedom of man-making is impossible without freedom of money-making, which is the most fundamental and vital of all freedoms. The present system is not one of commercial freedom, and the wage slavery complained of is not the result of the money-making freedom. It is the lack of commercial freedom that we hold responsible for the wage slavery, and our strongest objection to the present system is that the freedom of money-making is infringed in numerous ways. The first plank in our platform is full commercial freedom, and, so far from being impatient and desirous of being at once at our goal (as Mr. Bellamy imagines), we are ready to devote all our energies to the obtainment of commercial individualism, to the temporary exclusion of the other elements of the programme. The State Socialists are led astray by some of those who defend this system on the ground that it is individualistic; but the Anarchists never miss an opportunity to convict these pleaders of inconsistency and bad logic. The true individualists are not satisfied with the present system, and those who think that we enjoy commercial freedom today are ignorant of the principles of individualism. Individualism does not cover two concepts: it is simply usurped by some who misinterpret it, as the title of Christian is usurped by many whose life belies their tacit professions.

There are many minor errors in the Salt-Bellamy argument, but they may be passed over. One word, in conclusion, on the point raised in Mr. Salt's query whether it is reasonable to suppose that the men who so fully appreciate such intensely individualistic writers as Ibsen and Thoreau and Whitman should espouse a system so fatal to individuality. By way of solving this apparent paradox let us consider Mr. Salt's own case. He certainly appreciates the authors enumerated, yet he favors a system which they would shrink from in horror and disgust. How does he stomach the contradiction? Why, simply by shutting his mental eyes to the true meaning and inevitable consequences of Socialism, and by drawing an arbitrary distinction between man-making and money-making. The freedom of money-making he dismisses as a mere fraud and abuse, and encourages his imagination to dwell only on the beauties of man-making freedom which he *assumes* to be the essence of State Socialism. He absolves himself from proving his premises, invents a double transition, calls State Socialism justice and Anarchism the reign of love and social perfection, and everything becomes lovely and lucid. All contradiction disappears, and one and the same man may be a State Socialist when he talks about one thing and an Anarchist when he talks about another thing. Of course all this fine work collapses when you cruelly apply the test of fact to the fundamental propositions; but Mr. Salt has not yet applied the fatal test, and it is therefore easy for him to reconcile his appreciation of individualist writers with his love of State Socialism. Or take the case of G. Bernard Shaw. He understands Ibsenism better, perhaps, than Ibsen himself does, yet he preaches State Socialism. The explanation is to be found in the fact that he can see no other alternative to the present system, and has argued himself into the belief that State Socialism would allow greater scope to Ibsenism than the present system does. He, too, blinks at the evidence to the contrary. We wonder at the fact; but there is no disputing its presence.

Believing as we do in genuine reciprocity, we could not take leave of our subject without returning a cordial invitation to Mr. Salt and Mr. Bellamy to join *our* ranks and coöperate with us in achieving the freedom of man-making through the freedom of money-making. We cannot join them, but they can consistently join us. Complete freedom of money-making, we promise to show them, will do away with wage slavery and remove the other evils of which they are cognizant. They desire just laws, and Anarchism means exactly the obtainment of justice in political life. If they are dreaming of a still higher state of society, of the reign of beneficence and love, we remind them that it is unreasonable to expect to attain their goal without passing through a period of simple justice. We must be patient. There is a double transition before us,—from unjust laws to just laws, which is Anarchism *without* the millennium; from just laws to no laws, which is Anarchism *and* the millennium.

V. Y.

Letters from Belgium.

I.

To the Editor of Liberty:

About one year and six months ago Liberty was so kind as to express its hope—referring to a little monthly bulletin, "La Question Sociale," that I had just published then—that John Most would soon be deprived of the only fling against the Anarchists in which he had ever truthfully indulged,—namely, that they are without a single journal upon the continent of Europe. Liberty hoped also that, as I was engaged in a discussion with the Communist organ, "La Révolte," that discussion would surely emphasize and illuminate the difference between the two schools.

Unfortunately, however, that prediction could not be accomplished. Although I had then been for one year a subscriber to Liberty, I paid but little attention to that journal, because of my slight acquaintance with the English language. Not reading seriously the organ of individualist Anarchism, I thus continued to be an Individualist in heart only, without having completely and definitely studied the doctrine.

Then came the International Congress of Brussels in August of this year. Having witnessed that disgusting comedy, I understood then for the first time how hypocritical or ignorant the State Socialists are; and, on the other hand, knowing unfortunately too well, from having spent three years in indulging their unfounded hopes, that the Communistic Anarchists are utopian optimists and revolutionary ideologists, I resolved once for all to familiarize myself earnestly with individualistic Anarchism.

Not thinking it without interest to explain here succinctly how I came to that view, I beg the reader to allow me to extract from some numbers of Liberty itself a few reasons, among many others, why I became an individualistic Anarchist. The following propositions from this journal I have selected to express what I could not personally utter so clearly and concisely:

It is in vain for the revolutionist who hopes by force of ballots or bullets to abolish government to call himself an Anarchist, for, whatever he may become, he is now the enemy and not the friend of Anarchy. It is not the end hoped for, but the means employed, that makes the Anarchist. . . .

It is because the Anarchist believes individualism or Anarchy to be the opposite of brute force that he is inclined to endorse it and to advocate passive resistance as the best means of attracting the attention of the thinking public and the best method of reaching the mind of his fellowman. . . .

The Anarchist knows of no better method of propaganda at present than the educational one, than the intellectual method. It may be slow, yet it has the virtue of being sure, and certainly should be rapid enough for any reformer whose impatience does not subordinate his judgment to his feelings. . . .

Of our day it might be said that the pen is mightier than the sword. . . . Thought and investigation have since firmly established the truth that the heroic measures favored by the revolutionists are not necessary, and that there are better ways, surer ways, wiser methods through which the goal may be reached. . . .

For us to make Anarchists is the business at present, and at present we cannot have any other useful business. . . . Therefore, I say, make Anarchists. We Anarchists can do nothing else that is useful, and preaching and teaching is not out of date for that purpose; but rather for those who, like ourselves, do not believe in State Socialism, it is the only means of attaining to the new order of things. . . .

The means of attaining Socialism may or may not assume a militant form, but I believe that, so far as it is practicable, both the means and the end should be non-militant. . . .

Then liberty always, say the Anarchists. No use of force, except against the invader; and in those cases where it is difficult to tell whether the alleged offender is an invader or not, still no use of force except where the necessity of immediate solution is so imperative that we must use it to save ourselves. . . .

Anarchism is simply *liberty*, the absence of arbitrary and forceful control of one person or set of people over another person or set of people. It does what no other ism does: it allows you to make your own plans. . . .

There is only one liberty, and that liberty is the sovereignty of each individual. The so-called sovereignty of the people kills individual liberty as much as does divine right, and is mystical and soul-deadening. Every man is his own lord and law-giver. The law must not be poured into us, but must come from out of us. . . .

Nothing can be progressive and desirable that obstructs, or checks, or needlessly retards the movement towards freedom; nothing is wrong, dangerous, or reprehensible that rationally encourages that movement. . . .

Ideal economic relations are perfectly free relations; free contract and unrestricted competition between men enjoying equal opportunities and equal social chances will constitute the ruling principle of the coming age of reason and conscious and voluntary coöperation will be exclusively resorted to for purposes of economy and convenience. . . .

Modern Individualism or Anarchism demonstrates that the obtainment by labor of its natural wages—its entire product—is not incompatible with, or impossible under, a system of free competition and contract. It proves that labor exploitation is *not* the result of liberty in production and exchange. It shows, on the contrary, that such liberty is the only sure remedy for this exploitation, and that it is the absence of the former, its incompleteness, that begets the latter. . . .

The State Socialists fail to comprehend the difference between the present cut-throat competition and free competition. The difference between them is the difference that distinguishes an honest man from a thief. . . .

The *laissez-faire*-ists demand the abolition of all meddlesome and class legislation, of all privileges and monopolies artificially created for the especial benefit of a few to the detriment of the many. . . .

What Huxley has really weakened is the case of those Anarchists who build a baseless assumption and fanciful supposition. He justly rules out of court those who invent a theory of society, in explanation of its origin and existence, and then charge society with violating the rules and laws of their invention. If all Anarchists were guilty of such folly, such scientific men as Professor Huxley could never be expected to have respect for them. But the professor has yet to learn that there are Anarchists who proceed in a way that he himself would enthusiastically approve, who take nothing for granted and vitiate their arguments by no assumptions, but who study the facts of social life and from them derive the lesson that liberty would be the mother of order, and that the happiest and most stable society would be a society living, moving, and having its being in Anarchistic principles. . . .

The assumption of a state of Anarchy supervening upon a sudden collapse of Archy is absurd. Anarchists work for the abolition of the State, but by this they mean not its overthrow, but, as Proudhon put it, its dissolution in the economic organism. . . .

Modern believers in industrial freedom do not necessarily imply that in the absence of coercion men know and follow their interest in the highest and noblest sense; what they

imply is that freedom is the only means of discovering those interests and of learning to follow them. . . .

We care only for our own complete happiness, and this is *human nature*. But the more enlightened and refined we become, the less inclined we feel to hurt unnecessarily the feelings of others, — much less to invade their rights. We claim more and more liberty for ourselves, and we grant more and more liberty to others; because we understand and feel that the injury of one is the concern of all, and that, if all are not safe and free, none is. . . .

The ignorant alone attribute to philosophical Anarchists any hostility to the principle of cooperation (upon which society is founded). . . .

It is not necessary to suggest to men of mental culture that those who predict universal Communism as the outcome of individual liberty are without any rational ground for their prediction. The evidence is all against their hypothesis. Men are becoming more and more individualized, and their modes of living more and more diversified. . . .

To expect or believe that Communistic methods will predominate in an advanced society is obviously irrational, unless such a superabundance of material wealth is postulated as would do away with all care or anxiety about the proper use and distribution of it, to which case all objections to Communism are inapplicable. But it is unprofitable to dwell upon this position, since it has no bearing upon the present situation. . . .

It is of the highest importance that it be made clear just what we promise, demand, profess, as well as what we do not. We do not hold hopes of speedy deliverance and sudden emancipation. . . . We realize the fact that the progress of reform, even if sure, is very slow and by no means steady. While there seems to be overwhelming evidence in favor of the view that humanity must and will proceed in the right direction, there is no reason to suppose that we are guaranteed against temporary relapses and periods of stagnation. . . .

Let, however, no one be disquieted at the thought that, in spite of our struggles, slavery may be our lot instead of freedom, darkness instead of light. After all, we do not work for the future and in expectation of palpable results. Those results are desirable, and no chances should be thrown away; but we fight because therein lies our peace and contentment, because fight we must, because daily, hourly, are we thus impelled to struggle. Not to fight would mean not to live out our individual nature, not to be what we are, and this is impossible. . . . .

But here I must stop short for today. In subsequent letters I will finish this short enumeration of some of the numerous reasons why, soon or late, many other Communist-Anarchists will follow, here in Europe, in the footsteps of the writer of these letters, and adhere without restriction to the great cause of consistent Individualism. Certainly we cannot be optimistic at all about it; but there are, however, some reasons to have hope. OCTAVE BERGER.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM.

A Notable Exception.

[The Jeffersonian.]

Is it not a little singular that the organs of the Farmers' Alliance religiously refrain from criticising, considering, or even mentioning the plan of free mutual banking brought to the attention of the Alliance leaders by Mr. Westrup? It surely cannot be beneath the dignity of the financial authorities of the Alliance to examine a plan which such papers as the New York "Nation" and "Sun" have deemed deserving of favorable notice. One cannot expel the suspicion that the leaders of the Alliance are primarily politicians and office seekers and but secondarily financial reformers, and that the absence of politics from mutual banking makes that plan exceedingly distasteful to them. — *Liberty.*

This paper has repeatedly called attention to Mr. Westrup's articles on the mutual banking system, and commended the system because there were no politics in it, and because it could be put in operation without waiting to be given a political victory some time in the dim and distant future. Nevertheless, Liberty is correct in reference to the *organs* of the Alliance, which seem to harp exclusively on one string and to strike but one note from that. It is however not so much devotion to politics, but lack of study. Very few even heard of Westrup or mutual banking, but they have heard something about contraction and the national banks.

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